

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 540

SO 013 566

AUTHOR Duttweiler, Robert W.
TITLE Charismatic Leadership: The Historical Development of
a Political Concept.
PUB DATE Aug 81
NOTE 30p.
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Definitions; Leadership Qualities; *Politics
IDENTIFIERS *Charisma; Weber (Max)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the changing concept of charisma with the aim of distilling some useful meaning that may be applied to current political organizations and leaders. The author begins by exploring the different meanings of charisma and briefly overviewing how it has historically been applied. Charisma is of Greek origin literally meaning a gift, and was originally identified as a gift of grace or a divinely inspired calling to service, office, or leadership. Today the term has entered common usage in a variety of forms and is widely applied to virtually every situation in which a popular public or political personality is involved. There are three ways charisma is normally defined today. First is the Classic Weberian idea of supernatural endowment in which a leader derives his charisma from divine gifts and maintains this power as long as his followers believe in his extraordinary qualities. Second, the term is expanded by Weber and others to refer to the sacred or awe inspiring property of groups, offices, and even objects. Third, charisma is popularly used to refer to the personal qualities or to the political presence of a leader in politics. The author then examines some of the important interpretations of charisma. In particular the interpretations of Max Weber, Carl Friedrich, K.J. Ratnam, Dorothy Willner, Robert Tucker, Arthur Schweitzer, and Bensman and Givant are discussed. (Author/RM)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ROBERT W.
DUTTWEILER

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP:

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF A POLITICAL CONCEPT

August 1981

Robert W. Duttweiler
Assistant Professor and Assistant
Librarian
Augusta College
Augusta, Georgia

ED 206540

32 013 566

PURPOSE

"A charismatic leader is like a beautiful woman. Taken as a whole and looked on from afar we can all agree as to the extraordinary nature of the creature. Yet once we begin a detailed analysis of each part we find we have difficulty pointing to exactly those elements that produce the effect."¹

I intend to examine the changing concept of charisma with the aim of distilling some useful meaning that may be applied to current political organizations and leaders.

SCOPE

I will begin by exploring the different meanings of this concept-word and will develop the understanding by briefly overviewing how it has historically been applied. Once defined I will build the foundation with the original work by Max Weber.

To bring additional meaning to Weber's principles I will examine some of the important interpretations of his work which will show the progress towards contemporary usage of charisma.

"In the whole of Max Weber's political sociology, the concepts that, to all intents and purposes, had the greatest impact on the thinking of our time are those of charisma and charismatic leaders."² It is true that a great deal of scholarship is being applied to the understanding of charisma. The diversity of viewpoint found in this literature indicates the need for clearly defined terms.

CONTENT

The term 'charisma' is of Greek derivation literally meaning gift and was originally identified as a gift of grace or a divinely inspired calling to service, office or leadership. II Corinthians colored the term by indicating forms in which the gift of divine grace appear. This Biblical concept was next used by Rudolf Sohm in describing the Roman Catholic Church as a 'charismatic institution' but the "conception of charisma underwent its most important extension and formulation in the writings of Max Weber."³

"The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman powers, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not assessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader."⁴ According to this definition by Weber charisma is a property attributed to extra ordinary people such as religious prophets but just as naturally describes certain artists, political leaders and military heroes.

Contemporary writers in sociology and political science are groping with the term charisma in an attempt to develop a conceptual framework which might be of service in the analysis of twentieth century politics. In this attempt to develop a more current concept charisma has lost its consistency of meaning. It has entered common usage in a variety of forms and is widely applied to virtually every situation in which a popular public or political personality is involved.

Martin E. Spencer in his article, "What is Charisma?" attempts to untangle the confusion by listing three ways charisma is normally defined today. The

first is the classic Weberian idea of supernatural endowment in which a leader derives his charisma from divine gifts and maintains this power as long as his followers believe in his extraordinary qualities. Secondly the term is expanded by Weber and others to refer to the sacred or awe inspiring property of groups , offices and even objects. Each culture has sacred symbols which are seen as manifesting charismatic qualities. The Constitution of the United States, the aura surrounding the Office of the President and the Supreme Court are examples of this type are examples of this type of charisma. Many types of charisma are evident in the current political environment but it is the third meaning that may be the most valuable today. Charisma is popularly used to refer to the personal qualities of a leader, in politics to political presence. Charismatic personality becomes based on personal attributes, not divine gifts. Current usage has moved away from the supernatural and now speaks of extraordinary individuals, magnetic political personalities. It seems we are moving away from the pure charisma and realistically looking at leaders who project charismatic qualities but who also understand and manipulate the organizations in which they operate.

Modern charisma, what Fensman and Givant call 'pseudocharisma', readily admits to not being genuine or pure according to the standards set by Max Weber. This departure from traditional principles may seem in the same light as the growth of organizational theory. Originally a structure was brought to charisma by defining and listing the elements that made up the term. This was very important in providing a foundation of thought which modern theorists could examine and criticize. Charisma is now going through a phase of intense examination in which psychologists, sociologists and political scientists are rejecting the idea of a rigid definition. Charisma

is situational, it depends on the time, on the culture, on the predisposition of people involved and therefore the complexity of these factors preclude a fixed listing of elements that apply to all situations. Charisma is coming of age, it is struggling for a useful identity which its historical definition cannot provide.

Max Weber

Charismatic authority is, according to Weber, one of the three pure forms of legitimate authority, the other two being rational-legal and traditional. It should be understood that these three 'ideal types' do not exist independent of one another, do not exist in pure form. A leader may have elements of all three but be characterized by the visibly dominant type.

When examining charismatic authority three broad areas of study may be isolated. The leader and his personal qualities, his followers and their ideology, and most importantly the relationship between the two.

It must be clearly understood that "the concept of 'charisma' is here used in a completely 'value-neutral' sense."⁵ The term has been applied to dictators and religious prophets, to demagogues and war heroes. According to Weber they all may be charismatic for charismatic leadership does not imply they are possessed of admirable qualities; only that the qualities they do exhibit will be extraordinary, will be perceived to be exceptional and not commonly available to man. While there seems to be no one set of personal characteristics that charismatic leaders share as a class, one quality that may be common to all is a contagious faith and confidence in the community's capacity to overcome, under their leadership, its distress.⁶ There are no universal charismatics, no leaders who exhibit qualities that elicit

a charismatic reaction from all people at all times. What they must share in common is the ability to excite, to develop a sense of awe, to inspire devoted followers for it is only through this ability will they continue to be defined as charismatic. Just as quickly as the extraordinary powers inspire the crowd they can evaporate, "to be a charismatic leader is essentially to be perceived as such. It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma. Furthermore, such recognition of charisma on the part of followers must be reinforced from time to time by the leader's demonstration of charismatic powers. He must furnish 'signs' or 'proof' of the exceptional ability or qualities for the sake of which his followers render him their personal devotion; if he fails over a long period, his charismatic authority may disappear."⁷ Oratorical brilliance, physical appearance, gesture may all be seen as qualities that aid a charismatic leader. Actually the only universal quality that can ultimately be pointed to is the ability to effect people in a charismatic manner.

"The charismatic leader is always the creation of his followers. That is, charismatic authority is rooted in the belief system of the followers rather than in some transcendental characteristic of the leader."⁸ Although this reliance on followers is the cornerstone of a true charismatic, the leader, according to Weber, does not see himself dependent on his followers. Rather, being called to fulfill a mission, he sees his disciples as having a 'duty' toward him and those not followers of his cause are actually delinquent in duty.⁹ Charismatic leaders are able to project this righteousness of purpose because they believe they tap a force, such as God or

history, which overshadows common events.

This relationship between a leader and his followers is of the greatest importance because it is this interaction that defines charisma and sets it apart from other types of authority. Weber points out that a charismatic relationship between a leader and a crowd is most likely to occur during "times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious or political distress."¹⁰ In other words the catalysis to the charismatic response of the followers to the leader is based on the distress experienced by the crowd. Charismatic leadership is revolutionary by nature. The leader, because of unusual personal qualities, embodies the idea of salvation, of deliverance from distress. He is in essence a savior and this role helps explain the special emotional intensity of the charismatic response.¹¹ The quintessence of the divinely inspired charismatic leader must be Jesus Christ. He became known in a time of instability due to supernatural powers that inspired awe and devotion in his disciples. Even many of the terms surrounding Weber's pure form of charisma have religious overtones. "It must not be forgotten for an instant that the entire basis of Jesus' own legitimation... was the magical charisma he felt within himself"¹² and the response this sense of purpose aroused in people.

The study of charisma is undergoing intense reexamination. No consensus of opinion exists as to what is the true meaning and application of charisma in modern times. I think an overview of the differing theories will lead us to a better understanding of charisma.

CARL FRIEDRICH

A strict interpretation of charisma leads Carl Friedrich to the con-

clusion that charismatic power in its true form only applies to religious leaders. He refers back to Corinthians in which a lengthy listing of divine gifts is noteworthy because of the absence of political leadership. "Wisdom, knowledge, healing, yes, but not leadership, except the particular religious leadership involved in prophecy."¹³

Rudolf Sohm is used to strengthen Friedrich's position because Sohm applies the basic meaning of charisma, quite naturally, to the Christian church. "...the organization of Christianity is not legal but charismatic. Christianity is organized by the distribution of gifts of grace (Charismata)...the charisma is from God."¹⁴

Max Weber stated that the use of the value neutral term charisma can be applied to situations involving inspirational leaders such as demagogues. "Charisma is at times a 'crude swindle' and it may be used in any sense, profane or sacred, secular or religious...how this quality might be valued objectively 'correctly' from any ethical or other standpoint is completely irrelevant."¹⁵ Carl Friedrich totally rejects this value-free use of charisma because it groups together Hitler, Jesus Christ, Mussolini and Moses as being of the same type. He argues that demagogues and leaders of total-movements are fundamentally different from religious leaders in that they are typically preoccupied with power and organization. This same preoccupation with power argument could be made against those we consider noble charismatic political leaders such as Roosevelt or Churchill.

Friedrich's most damning evidence against charisma as a modern concept, other than in religious situations, comes directly out of Weber's own writings. Weber assigns mystical, irrational, unstable qualities to charisma

and the source of this unusual power is seen as magical and supernatural. Charisma is described as existing in a world of myth and sorcery where awe inspiring leaders have influence over and are able to elicit belief from the crowd. Almost by definition it is a type of leadership that is incapable of dealing with modern industrial society and unsuperstitious, at times cynical, crowds. "The notion of a man-god, or of a human being endowed with divine or supernatural powers, belongs essentially to that earlier period of religious history in which gods and men are still viewed as being of much the same order."¹⁶

Charisma was an important part of political leadership when church and state were one. "At the present time, charismatic leadership is of minor importance, simply because the faith in a transcendent being is not sufficiently strong or general to provide an adequate basis for legitimizing any political leadership..."¹⁷ Carl Friedrich is basically calling for the rejection of charisma as a meaningful term in our complex rational world.

K. J. RATNAM

The article "Charisma and Political Leadership" by K. J. Ratnam continues the discreditation of charisma. His main contention is that charisma is so vague a term and involves so many immeasurable factors that it is now of little value when attempting to understand a leadership situation. What are the qualities of a charismatic, can they be listed and used as a yardstick against which we may evaluate leaders? Weber makes no clear statement on what the relevant qualities are. Rather we must look at the reaction of the followers to see if a charismatic relationship exists. To Ratnam

"all this is very confusing. For one thing it is not very helpful to be told that the only 'proof' of a leader's charismatic authority is its recognition as genuine by his followers. We want to know more about how 'personal charisma' comes to be recognized."¹⁸

What produces the 'emotional bond' that exists between a leader and his followers? This psychological ability to inspire confidence is not unique to charismatic leadership. The society, the issues, the time a leader comes to the stage all influence the charismatic process. Having so many variables, it seems to Ratnam that skillful management could play an important role in making leaders. Propaganda is an effective political tool and manifestations of popularity cannot always be taken on face value.

Ratnam's purpose is to point out that charisma is not now defined in a manner that meaningfully makes it distinct. I believe rather than attempting to discredit the term, his point is really to encourage a more holistic approach to the study of this leadership style.

DOROTHY WILLNER

Carl Friedrich used the idea of myth to discredit modern charisma. Dorothy Willner takes exception to this stating that charisma actually "depends upon the leader's ability to draw upon and manipulate the body of myth in a given culture and the actions and values associated with these myths."¹⁹

She begins by questioning the indiscriminate and widespread use of the word charisma stating that scholarly examination of the concept is most justified. She wonders whether the defining of charisma requires a listing of personality traits. Standing firmly behind Weber she contends "it is not

so much what the leader is but how he is regarded by those subject to his authority that is decisive to the validity of charisma. His character resides in the perceptions of the people he leads."²⁰ Whether he is in the service of heaven or hell the person who has an inspiring effect upon a group is charismatic for that group.

The birth of a charismatic leader is most likely to occur in a climate of uncertainty and unpredictability. With this in mind Willner contends charismatic authority is most visible today in newer nations which are undergoing economic, religious and political distress. This seems in conjunction with the thinking of Max Weber.

In "The Rise and Role of Charismatic Leaders" the process of coming to power is outlined. An individual presents himself in a time of need and initially inspires a small elite group of disciples. Eventually all those predisposed to the coming of a new order will respond to the leader's voicing common grievances by giving him their support. "The charisma of a leader is bound up with and indeed, may even depend upon his becoming assimilated in the thought and feelings of a populace, to its sacred figures, divine beings or heroes."

Each culture has a body of myth that explains the past, present, as well as the future. It gives a people an identity, something in common that ties them together. When a leader is able to associate himself and his message with this communal myth he is in fact validating his authority. "The assimilation of historical events to the pattern of traditional myth...endows the event or individual with the aura or sanction of the myth itself."²² Hit-

ler associated his political party with a historical, mythical view of German culture that inspired followers. He derived his charismatic power from this myth and helped perpetuate the association by use of symbols, ceremony and propaganda.

The strategy for achieving this association with myth includes rhetoric employed in speeches; allusions to myth and history; use of gesture and movement; employment of ritual and ceremony; and the manner of dealing with doubt and crisis.²³ Being culturally derived the charismatic elements that are responded to will differ from country to country.

Willner believes that this charismatic leader, who is a symbol of unity, is evident in many developing nations. "The charismatic leader can conceivably use his appeal to integrate the state and to create strong central government institutions to modernize the society."²⁴ She sees the concept of charisma as vital to the understanding of modern political activity and believes it is through charismatic leaders that third world nations will unify and develop.

ROBERT TUCKER

Robert Tucker is a staunch defender of charisma's place in the political world, particularly when applied to revolutionary movements. Problems do exist in clarity and application of the term but these will be met as more theorists grope to apply charisma to particular situations.

The bases for the view of charismatic leadership as revolutionary comes from Weber's point that charisma is alien to the world of everyday routine, that it calls for new ways of life and thought. It rejects old

rules and demands change thus being innovative and revolutionary in character.

Robert Tucker sees the growth process of a charismatic movement in very much the same manner as Dorothy Willner. The initial phase is the formulation of a small charismatic following. As it attracts new members it achieves the status of a movement. It develops an organization which in the modern world is most likely to take the form of a political party. If great numbers turn to the charismatic a mass movement is formed that will attempt to gain political power. Once in power it will have enormous resources of influence and may even become international in scope as the world communist movement was able to do.

It is very important to avoid the problem of confusing power and charisma. A case should always be examined back to the person's emergence as a leader once he has achieved a certain status. Power is a source of phenomena that very much resembles the effects of charisma without actually being such. A leader does not need to achieve power in order to qualify as a charismatic. What is important is that he attract a charismatic following and show the distinct ability to become the center of the charismatic movement as it grows along the lines defined above. This movement may never actually achieve power but it is charismatic all the same if it meets this criteria.

Tucker has isolated a general rule that may be applied to all cases and used as a test of authenticity. "When a leader-personality is genuinely charismatic, his charisma will begin to manifest itself before he becomes politically powerful...the pre-power stage of a leader's career is

of critical significance."²⁵

Tucker subscribes to the belief, already covered, that a charismatic leader arises in times of distress and is perceived as in essence a savior. The insight he brings to this is the idea of 'situational charisma'. This refers to a "leader-personality of non-messianic tendency who evokes a charismatic response simply because he offers, in a time of acute distress, leadership that is perceived as a source and means of salvation from distress."²⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt is used as an example and in fact there is a theory that our greatest presidents achieved their status, not because of their own innate ability, but because they were in office and responded to this nation's needs at historic times. Charismatic leadership is situational in that the times predisposed the general public to look for someone to save them from their current problems.

Turning his attention to the people being moved Tucker sees a charismatic movement as most likely in a society that is experiencing many forms of distress concurrently. Study of the phenomenon of distress may actually lead to an understanding of when people in large numbers become 'charisma-hungry', when a leader who offers salvation is most likely to be accepted.

Charismatics do have certain personal qualities that seem common to them as a class. "Notable among these is a peculiar sense of mission, comprising a belief both in the movement and in themselves as the chosen instrument to lead the movement to its destination." As a whole these leaders seem to show unusual powers of vision and communication. They are able to quickly grasp a situation, even if it is new to them, and just as quickly formulate a response that is consistent with their movement. Stubborn self-

confidence, limitless faith in their ability to influence change and a righteous sense of purpose seem to surround these inspirational leaders.

It should be remembered that their personality qualities are only one of the many elements that influence the crowd. The policies they develop, the formula for salvation they expose is important to their being accepted as leaders. Great personal powers of persuasion, or any other characteristic, only aids them in accomplishing the goal of leadership.

Robert Tucker is one of several contemporary writers that sees charismatic leaders consciously formulating a method to influence people to gain power. Charisma is no longer left to the will of the gods but is created through propaganda, manipulation and conscious effort. The communist conspiracy, the capitalist conspiracy or the Jewish conspiracy are all deliberately developed theories intended to unite a people behind a particular leader in an unstable time. Charisma is coming into the twentieth century, into an age of mass communications and psychological manipulation.

We need to consider what happens to a charismatic movement after the death of its founding leader. Weber calls this the depersonalization of charisma or 'routinization'. It is transformed from a purely personal, extraordinary relationship into a more established type of authority. Examples are the Pope or royal families where charisma is passed down generation to generation.

Many have difficulty using routine and charisma in the same sentence. Pure charisma is anything but routine and it makes little sense to call charismatic what is actually a transformation process to traditional or bureaucratic authority. "Weber might have stood on firmer ground if he had

couched this part of his theory of charismatic leadership not in terms of the routinizing of charisma, but rather in terms of its transformation into other forms of authority."²⁸

This is not to say all charismatic elements die with their founding leader. Tucker sees a cult of the founder phenomenon that reveres the memory of the fallen leader. Lenin is used as an example of this type of 'cult of the founder'. Although his charisma did not transfer to a successor it did live on in the movement he founded and became a new part of the culture and myth of Russian society.

ARTHUR SCHWEITZER

Modern thought on charisma has easily moved from the idea of supernatural gifts of divine origin to placing emphasis on a sense of calling. It seems that to convey this sense of purpose a leader "has to refrain from certain worldly pleasures of the multitude and thus show his single-minded commitment to his task."²⁹ Schweitzer may be confusing form and substance. It seems that the form that is presented, often through the media, is most important to modern charismatic leaders and the substance is important interacting on a personal level. Modern communications and the 'science of hype' have taken much of the genuine personal element out of charisma. Personal contact is often discouraged for it cannot be controlled in the same manner as the media. The line between a leader and an actor is a fine one. The charismatic "is constantly in danger of becoming an actor by playing upon the emotions of his listeners. In possessing the power to arouse ecstasies, he generates the enthusiasm of the masses and derives power from their emotional attachment to him. The enthusiasm for a charismatic figure may thus be

misplaced if the leader himself feels no commitment either for the cause or for the well-being of his followers."³⁰ It should again be remembered that charisma is a value-neutral term, it may be used in many ways that are manipulative or misdirected.

The charismatic leader gets his authority from the issues he is associated with and his power depends on how effectively he makes these issues the passionate concern of his followers. "Actually, the motive to please his followers by adopting any kind of possible issue fits the political manipulator."³¹ The first rule of politics is to get elected. A leader with an intense sense of purpose might actually feel righteous in using media and manipulation in achieving his noble end.

Max Weber distinguishes four kinds of political leaders in which charisma is evident in two. The first is the demagogue who is not committed to any values. "Being unable to commit himself to a cause, he remains a mere agitator who cannot translate the confidence of voters into a purposeful policy. His lack of inner commitment prevents him from becoming a genuine charismatic leader."³² Strikingly different is the ideological leader who is able to enunciate his ideology effectively. The confidence of his followers rests solely in their belief in his issues and motivated only by ideology, not any inspiration, he fails to become a charismatic leader.

Two of Weber's types of political leaders are charismatic. The first is the clearly charismatic leader of a party. His authority is derived from his competence as a party leader and from his ability to gain and hold the confidence of the masses. The extraordinary qualities of the leader and the in-

tensity of the devotion of the crowd are both muted in this type of leader. Although the inspiration and emotion are at a low level it seems only fitting for the element of distress in the society is often minimal.

The remaining type is the Caesarist leader whose charismatic qualities may be recognized either by voters or soldiers. General de Gaulle exemplifies this leader, what Weber called 'the dictator of the battlefield of elections'. He personified the authorization tendency in political charisma, the tendency to glorify one leader.

Schweitzer views the different kinds of political leaders and concludes that political charisma is compatible with democracy if mass emotionality has been turned into an emotional bond between leader and led; if the leader has captured or built up a political organization by means of which he gains and renews his power in competitive elections; if he respects and utilizes democratic institutions and procedures and has his power delimited by them; and if his goals and policies are inspired and limited by some democratic creed.³³ The more of these conditions are met the more democratic is charisma, the fewer met the more dictatorial the charisma.

Politics does have a castrating effect on charisma in that ultimately the party organization will overpower the emotionalism of natural charisma. Charisma is the creative revolutionary force of history because it has the capacity to undermine tradition as well as bureaucracy.³⁴ But just as the momentary intensity of charisma gains authority the process of an establishment, regaining influence is already begun. "Every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material interests:

every hour of its existence brings it nearer to this end."³⁵ Charisma is an important element in the coming to power of political leaders, it plays a minimal role as a part of the on going political system.

BENSMAN AND GIVANT

Bensman and Givant in "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept" modernize charismatic thinking. In established political institutions we are not dealing with pure charisma which is revolutionary, direct, unmediated and out side all institutional organizations. Rather we are dealing with charisma of office which is in many ways the opposite of charisma in its pure form.

Weber himself was aware secular, political charisma exists in modern political states "in times of great public excitement, charismatic leaders may emerge even in solidly bureaucratic parties, as was demonstrated by Roosevelt's campaign in 1912." The intervention of a genuine charismatic personality will greatly unsettle a political organization and rational forces will eventually succeed in checking charisma. "This will also remain true of the United States, even in the face of the plebiscitary presidential primaries, since in the long run the continuity of professional operations is tactically superior to emotional worship. Only extraordinary conditions can bring about the triumph of charisma over the organization."³⁷

Modern charisma, the idea of political presence, certainly differs in fundamental ways from a charisma of earlier times. Perhaps they do share a larger than life quality. In the popular sense of the word, even when

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

used to describe movie stars or professional athletes, we are seeing charisma as the ability to project a larger, more powerful image than mere physical presence might suggest. It has been modernized by the use of mass media to achieve this affect. This development came after the writings of Max Weber and limit his thinking to an earlier time.

The form of charisma has been drastically altered within this century. "Ultimately the modern usage of the term charisma refers to an ability to project an image of direct, exciting, sincere, engaging and 'human persona'. The very term 'project' implies, in the modern world, that these qualities are presented from a distance."³⁸ Modern mass communication uses charisma to overcome these distances. "Modern charisma entails the ability, whether planned or unplanned, to use or to be used by the mass media in such a way as to convey a sense of immediacy that appears to negate the very media that requires its use."³⁹

Just as power can artificially appear to be charismatic so can the media falsely produce this effect. It is argued that historically charisma had to be real to have a lasting effect; in modern times it is often artificial and contrived and only genuine in rare instances. Karl Lowenstein uses de Gaulle as an example of this type of artificial charisma, the result of extremely skillful manipulation of propaganda techniques.

Charisma in its classic sense meant direct, immediate social interaction. In its modern usage it is indirect, conveyed by intervening agencies. We live in a high technology mass society that has imposed its own imprint on what once was a very extraordinary quality. Past studies have not inquired into the role media plays in modern charismatic political leaders. Bensman and Givant sees this as the cornerstone to understanding

present day charismatics.

"The concept of genuine charisma, as used by Weber, referred to actual personal relationships between a leader and his Followers. The mass media substitutes symbolic social relationships for actual ones."⁴⁰ The idea that charisma is the result of rational calculation and planning is contrary to the original belief that charisma is nonrational and natural (a gift of grace). Once it is clear that modern charisma is not necessarily genuine or pure, in Weber's use of the term, we can understand the concept in modern political situations.

Modern 'scientific politics' includes the rational search for charismatic leaders. We have gone a step beyond using media to project the image of a leader and are rationally choosing leaders on their media skills. Personal characteristics, values and issues all are of secondary importance. The goal is to get into power, so speech and dramatic lessons are taken, elaborate ceremonies planned, a commodity - the charismatic leader - is created.

"Modern charisma rests upon the conscious selection of themes, appeals, slogans and imagery that is based upon the systematic study of audiences, target populations, constituencies and strategic publics."⁴¹ The human relations movement has come to politics. The behavioral sciences are being used to study how to sell a political product.

We are actually reaching the point where political personalities of star quality are so numerous it is hard to conceive of a modern political movement without a charismatic spokesman. They decry bureaucratic impersonality, economic exploitation, political corruption and promise to bring new leadership to the country. Often the real goal is not reform but to

become a part of the establishment and power structure they so loudly criticized.

Bensman and Givant have sought to demonstrate that the concept of charismatic leadership, as developed by Weber, is of little use to analysis of modern politics and social movements. The very size, impersonality, and fragility of mass society produces crises and stresses that can be exploited on a mass scale by means of the rational use of charisma. Max Weber, living in a very different time, did not foresee this possibility.

We must develop a new term, 'pseudocharisma', to allow us to transcend charisma's historical meaning. "Pseudocharisma simply means the employment of the means, imagery, the appearance of charismatic leadership as a rational device by which rationally calculating leadership groups attempt to achieve or maintain power."⁴² Charisma has lost much of its excitement as it has been modernized. Our world is so rational that even our seemingly emotional leaders are based in rationality.

CONCLUSION

We have seen an amazing evolution of charismatic leaders. Religious prophets, such as Jesus Christ and Moses, are closely related to the original pure type of charisma. World history is studded with heroic examples of extraordinary men who captured the imagination of their followers. Max Weber's typology was an attempt to develop an ideal standard against which charisma could be examined. As difficult as it is to categorize extraordinary individuals his writings on charismatic authority provided much insight, until recently.

With the advent of mass communications and industrialization new rules were imposed. Weber "failed to foresee the 'rational' political movements based on the systematic exploitation of irrationality".⁴³ He failed to foresee that the natural, uncontrollable, irrational quality of charisma would be replaced by rationally planned charismatic leaders. The truly unique, extraordinary and personal quality of charisma has been homogenized and modernized into an efficient and effective concept yet lacking the magic it once had.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Joseph Sanders, "Beauty and Charisma: A Comment on A. Schweitzer's 'Theory of Political Charisma'" Comparative Studies in Society and History 16 (March 1974), 182.

² Karl Lowenstein, Max Weber's Political Ideas in the Perspective of Our Time, (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 74.

³ Talcott Parsons, ed., Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Free Press, 1964), p. 358.

⁴ S. N. Eisenstadt, Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building, ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 48.

⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶ Robert C. Tucker, "Personality and Political Leadership" Political Science Quarterly 92 (Fall 1977), 388.

⁷ Robert C. Tucker, "The Theory of Charismatic Leadership" Daedalus 97 (Summer 1968), 737.

⁸ Richard R. Fagen, "Charismatic Authority and the Leadership of Fidel Castro" Western Political Quarterly 18 (1965), 275.

⁹ Parsons, Max Weber, p. 360.

¹⁰ Eisenstadt, Max Weber, p. 18.

¹¹ Tucker, "Theory of Charismatic Leadership", p. 743.

¹² Joseph Ben-Sman and Michael Givant, "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept" Social Research 42 (Winter 1975), 573.

¹³ Carl J. Friedrich, "Political Leadership and Charismatic Power" Journal of Politics 23 (February 1961), 13.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁸K. J. Ratnam, "Charisma nad Political Leadership" Political Studies 12 (October 1964), 345.

¹⁹Ann R. Willner and Dorothy Willner, "The Rise and Role of Charismatic Leaders" American Academy of Political and Social Science. Annals 358 (March 1965), 77.

²⁰Ibid., p. 77.

²¹Ibid., p. 82.

²²Ibid., p. 83.

²³Ibid., p. 83.

²⁴Ibid., p. 86.

²⁵Tucker, "Theory of Charismatic Leadership", p. 740.

²⁶Ibid., p. 744.

²⁷Ibid., p. 749.

²⁸Ibid., p. 753.

²⁹Albert Schweitzer, "Theory and Political Charisma" Comparative Studies in Society and History 16 (March 1974), 153.

³⁰Ibid., p. 156.

³¹Ibid., p. 158.

³²Ibid., p. 169.

³³Ibid., p. 174.

³⁴Ibid., p. 175.

³⁵Bensman, "Charisma and Modernity", p. 576.

³⁶Ibid., p. 594.

³⁷Ibid., p. 595.

³⁸Ibid., p. 601.

³⁹Ibid., p. 601.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 603.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 606.

⁴²Ibid., p. 612.

⁴³Ibid., p. 611.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Downston, James V., Jr. Rebel Leadership. New York: Free Press, 1973.
- Eisenstadt, S N., Ed. Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Freund, Julien. The Sociology of Max Weber. Translated by Mary Ilford. New York: Random House, 1968.
- Gerth, H. H., and Mills, C. Wright., ed. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1948.
- Giddens, Anthony. Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- Loewenstein, Karl. Max Weber's Political Ideas in the Perspective of Our Time. Translated by Richard Clara Winston. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966.
- Parsons, Talcott., ed. Max Weber: The Theory of Social And Economic Organization. Translated by A. M. Henderson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Parsons, Talcott. The Structure of Social Action. Vol. II: Weber. New York: McGraw Hill, 1933; reprint ed., New York: Free Press, 1949.
- Miller, S. M. Max Weber. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1963.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARTICLES

- Benjamin, Joseph, and Givant, Michael. "Charisma and Modernity: The Use and Abuse of a Concept." Social Research 42 (Winter 1975): 570-614.
- Fagen, Richard R. "Charismatic Authority and the Leadership of Fidel Castro." Western Political Quarterly 18 (1965): 275-284.
- Friedrich, Carl J. "Political Leadership and Charismatic Power." Journal of Politics 23 (February 1961): 3-24.
- Glassman, Ronald. "Legitimacy and Manufactured Charisma." Social Research 42 (Winter 1975): 615-636.
- Oommen, T. K. "Charisma, Social Structure and Social Change." Comparative Studies in Society and History 10 (1967-1968): 85-99.
- Ratnam, K. J. "Charisma and Political Leadership." Political Studies 12 (October 1964): 344-354.
- Sanders, Joseph. "Beauty and Charisma: A Comment on A. Schweitzer's 'Theory of Political Charisma.'" Comparative Studies in Society and History 16 (March 1974): 182-186.
- Schweitzer, Albert. "Theory and Political Charisma." Comparative Studies in Society and History 16 (March 1974): 150-181.
- Shils, Edward. "Charisma, Order, and Status." American Sociological Review 30 (April 1965): 199-213.
- Spencer, Martin E. "What is charisma?" British Journal of Sociology 24 (September 1973): 341-354.
- Stark, Stanley. "Toward a Psychology of Charisma: The Innovation Viewpoint of Robert Tucker." Psychological Reports 23 (1968): 1163-1166.
- Tucker, Robert C. "Personality and Political Leadership." Political Science Quarterly 92 (Fall, 1977): 383-393.
- Willner, Ann R., and Willner, Dorothy. "The Rise and Role of Charismatic Leaders." American Academy of Political and Social Science. Annals 358 (March 1965): 77-88.